DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 373 160 CE 066 958

AUTHOR Safrit, R. Dale
TITLE Evaluating Today's Culture and Visioning for Tomorrow's Cultural Growth: Effectively Utilizing Stakeholders in Planning Strategically for Adult Education.
PUB DATE Apr 94
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the International Conference on the Practice of Adult Education and Social Development (Jinan, China, April 13-18, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; *Cooperative Planning; *Cultural Context; Learning Activities; *Organizational Climate; *Organizational Development; Partnerships in Education; *Strategic Planning; Volunteers; Volunteer Training; Worksheets

ABSTRACT

This document contains a series of materials that were developed to help adult educators involve all stakeholders (adult learners, funders, administrators, legislators) in assessing internal and external cultures (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of an adult education organization (AEO) and then using the information gained to plan strategically for adult education. Included in the document are handouts and worksheets with activities on the following topics: understanding and developing strategic plans; profiling an AEO from the standpoint of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; identifying organizational values for an AEO; developing a mission statement; formulating a vision statement; selecting an action strategy; and translating values, missions, and visions into actions. Contains 17 references. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 373 160

EVALUATING TODAY'S CULTURE AND VISIONING FOR TOMORROW'S CULTURAL GROWTH: EFFECTIVELY UTILIZING STAKEHOLDERS IN PLANNING STRATEGICALLY FOR ADULT EDUCATION

R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D.
Extension Specialist, Volunteerism,
Ohio State University Extension
Assistant Professor, Agricultural Education
The Ohio State University
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, OH 43210
Tel. 614-292-9606
FAX 614-292-1240
Internet *safrit.1@osu.edu*

NOTE: NO PORTION OF THESE MATERIALS MAY BE DUPLICATED OR ADAPTED WITHOUT PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE AUTHOR

ABSTRACT

Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. The process of strategic planning focuses on assessing current organizational and surrounding social culture and consequently designing, implementing and monitoring long range plans for improving organizational decision making and effectiveness. The end product of strategic planning is a specific written document that enables all organizational stakeholders to comprehend, analyze and critique the goals, objectives and strategies that are being used to achieve the organization's mission. Strategic planning encourages an adult education organization to address both present and future interactions with its social environment that results in continued organizational success and increased social development.

The following innovative materials have been developed by the author to enable adult educators to effectively involve all stakeholders (e.g., adult learners, funders, administrators, legislators, etc.), or representatives of all stakeholder types, in assessing the current adult organization's internal and external cultures (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). These materials have been used successfully by the author with several adult education organizations, and may be used to assess future organizational directions by developing values, mission, and vision statements and action strategies for adult education organizations.

CE 066 958

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R D Safrit

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN ???

There's an old Chinese proverb that goes something like this...

If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain...
If you want ten years of prosperity, grow trees...
If you want one hundred years of prosperity,
grow people.

Adult education organizations are in the "people business", working with adult learners to help them improve themselves, their families, and their communities. And few would argue that the ultimate goal of adult education organizations is "one hundred years of prosperity"!

But, can we *really* plan to be as successful one hundred years from now as we are today? Who has the magic, crystal ball that will enable us to see that far into the future? Who should be "looking" into that crystal ball and making the decisions today about adult education organizations of tomorrow? These and similar questions may be addressed through the idea of **STRATEGIC PLANNING.**

Strategic planning is...

AN ONGOING, FUTURE-ORIENTED, VALUES-BASED PROCESS THAT EMPOWERS AN ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBERS TO IDENTIFY ACTION STRATEGIES NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION IN EVER-CHANGING AND DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTS.

STRATEGIC PLANNING can be compared to **BUILDING A HOUSE.** You, the **MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION,** are the **ARCHITECTS.** You will design an original floor plan and specifications for a structure that will serve our family's needs today and can also be adapted to meet future needs of our family. Remember: as architects, we are most concerned with making sure our home has a solid foundation, is constructed of quality materials, has room for additional bedrooms as our family grows, and has a kitchen that can accommodate future appliances (that may not even be invented today!). We are *not* concerned with specific details, such as what brand of appliances to purchase, or what color to paint the living room.

Before we begin constructing our house, we must first **SURVEY THE PROPERTY** to determine how we can best place our house. With strategic planning, a **S.W.O.T. PROFILE** is the tool we use to survey our organization to determine present strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In constructing our house, we first build a solid **FOUNDATION** for the actual structure. The foundation for a strategic plan are the **ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES** shared by the members of our organization. Our organizational values are those things that we stand for and are most important to us. In building the actual structure, we first **CONSTRUCT THE FRAME.** The frame for our strategic plan is the **MISSION** of our adult education organization, why we exist and what our ultimate purpose is. We have a mental image in our mind of what we want our finished house to look like, foundation, walls, roof, and all. This **IDEAL, MENTAL IMAGE** is our organization's **VISION.** Our vision is our inspiration and motivation to work to complete our house, so that our family can move in. Finally, we must **FURNISH OUR HOUSE** with those items of furniture that will make our

house a home. The furnishings of our strategic plan will be the **ACTION STRATEGIES** that we develop to reach our vision and fulfill our mission.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES, ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION, ORGANIZATIONAL VISION, and **ACTION STRATEGIES**... these are the respective components of an effective strategic plan.

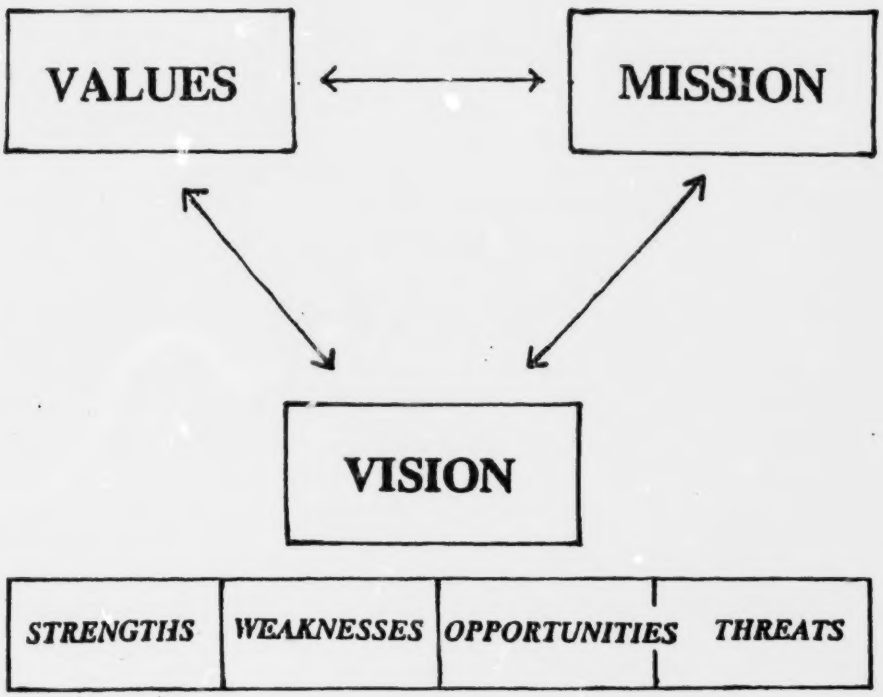

Figure 1. A model of strategic planning

A S.W.O.T. PROFILE OF OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION *

Please take a few moments to think about our organization as it exists today. What are (1) the things we do best (i.e., our strengths), (2) the things we are currently doing that we could be doing better (i.e., our weaknesses), (3) the things we should be doing that we currently are not doing (i.e., our opportunities), and (4) the things that could threaten our continued existence (i.e., our threats). Then, please list below those things you believe to be our most important...

(1) STRENGTHS	(3) OPPORTUNITIES
(2) WEAKNESSES	(4) THREATS

* Prepared by R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D., for use at the 1993 AAACE Adult Education Conference, November 20, 1993; may not be duplicated or adapted without prior consent of author.

WHAT IS AN ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE?

Our organizational values communicate "what we stand for" and "what is important to us" in our adult education organization. A sign of a healthy, productive organization is agreement (or congruence) between an organization's values and the daily actions and behaviors of its members and leaders. A positive impact on performance results from all members of an organization understanding and identifying with the group's organizational values; however, when members do not understand or are uncertain about the organization's values, then disagreement, distrust, and low productivity result.

Identifying an organization's values is a vital precursor to developing a strategic plan. Organizational values are like a "yardstick" that you can "hold up" to our strategic plan to see if it "measures up" to what you believe is important and what you stand for in adult education organizations.

As an example, Ohio State University Extension (an adult education organization) has identified the following values for the organization:

As Extension educators, we are dedicated to the following values for our organization:

We believe in an emphasis on excellence in educational programming;

We believe in programs that help people solve problems;

We believe in useful, practical programs;

We believe in helping people help themselves;

We believe in quick responses to clientele concerns;

We believe in the unbiased delivery of information;

We believe in credibility with clientele;

We believe in honesty and integrity in our work; and

We believe in a philosophy of teamwork.

As an another example (and format or style), Ohio 4-H youth development identified the following organizational values:

The following beliefs form the foundation for the Ohio 4-H youth development program:

Youth development is the focus of everything we do and 4-H encourages individuals to reach their potential through:

* *active involvement in self-determination of their learning activities;*
* *quality experiences that stimulate the life-long learning of values and skills;*
* *relationships that empower people to voluntarily help themselves and each other;*
* *hands-on and experiential learning that allows learning by doing;*
* *growth from successes and failures;*
* *exploration and opportunities; and*
* *supportive and nurturing environments.*

Partnerships are essential to successful youth development for:

* *creating caring environments;*
* *developing resources;*
* *delivering innovative and educational programs;*
* *developing mentorships; and*
* *accessing and applying research-based knowledge.*

Volunteerism is fundamental to:

* *developing and implementing programs;*
* *developing adult and youth leadership;*
* *helping youth to value volunteerism; and*
* *achieving the 4-H mission and vision.*

Diversity strengthens the ability of 4-H to:

* *develop positive values among program participants in today's global society;*
* *develop and deliver quality educational experiences;*
* *learn and share with one another; and*
* *provide opportunities for program involvement regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or Vietnam-era veteran status.*

IDENTIFYING ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES FOR OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (WORK SHEET) *

The values of an organization communicate "what we stand for" and "what is important to us". A positive impact on performance results from all members of an organization understanding and identifying with the group's values; however, when members do not understand or are uncertain about the organization's values, then discord, distrust and low productivity result.

Please take a few moments to think about the organizational values in our adult education organization. It is important that we <u>each</u> identify separate values that, as individuals, we associate with our organization. Based on these separate values, we may determine which values we share with many of our colleagues. Please take the time to ask yourself a few important questions. What do we <u>stand for</u> in our adult education organization? What are the <u>ideas and concepts that are most important to us</u>? What are the <u>beliefs that hold us together</u> as a team and give us a special "tingling" sensation when we think about them? The answers to these and similar questions can be thought of as the <u>organizational values for our adult education organization</u>. Please jot down the individual values you have identified in the spaces provided below, and be prepared to share them with our colleagues.

I BELIEVE THAT THE FOLLOWING IDEAS AND CONCEPTS ARE "WHAT WE STAND FOR", "WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO US", AND "WHAT HOLDS US TOGETHER" IN OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (PLEASE IDENTIFY AT LEAST TWO AND AS MANY AS FOUR ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES...THEY ARE LISTED IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OR RANK)...
AN ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE THAT I'VE IDENTIFIED FOR OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION IS...
ANOTHER ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE I'VE IDENTIFIED IS...
(OPTIONAL) ANOTHER ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE IS...
(OPTIONAL) A FOURTH ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE I'VE IDENTIFIED IS...

* Prepared by R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D., for use at the 1993 AAACE Adult Education Conference, November 20, 1993; may not be duplicated or adapted without prior consent of author.

WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?

A mission statement should reflect the basic purpose of an organization. A organizational mission statement states, in very explicit, terms:

* **WHAT** the organization should be contributing to society;
* **WHOM** the organization should serve;
* **HOW** it should serve people; and
* the **BENEFITS** to society as a result of its programs.

An organization's mission statement should capture what the organization's members intend to do as a total group to achieve the organizational vision. It should:

* **SET FUTURE DIRECTIONS** for the organization;
* **BE CLEAR AND CONCISE** in order to appeal to as wide a constituency as possible;
* **BE INSPIRATIONAL** and make us feel good; and
* **NEVER BE STATED ONLY IN NUMBERS** (financial or membership goals).

Take a few moments to think about our adult education organization, both as it exists today but, more importantly, what we want it to become during the next twenty years. What is the most important reason that our adult education organization exists today, and what is the basic, most critical goal/purpose for having our programs? Who are the "clients" that our adult education organization's programs should serve? How should our adult education organization serve clients? What does our organization contribute to society? What makes our adult education organization unique and different from similar organizations and programs?

The answers to all of these questions will help identify the organizational mission of our adult education organization. Remember that in thinking about the mission of our organization, it is just as important to consider what the organization is ***not*** trying to be and what it is ***not*** trying to do. Our organization's Mission Statement should be concise, stated clearly and inspirational, both for individuals currently involved with our programs and individuals who presently know nothing about our organization.

Following are two examples of well-written organizational mission statements:

> ***The mission of the System of Extension Organizations at the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University is to help diverse audiences, with emphasis on those with limited resources, improve their quality of life through the application of educational and research-based information focused on critical issues and needs.***

> **Ohio State University Extension:**
> ***Our mission is to help people improve their lives through an educational process using scientific knowledge focused on identified issues and needs.***

THE MISSION OF OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (WORK SHEET) *

Please take a few moments to think about our adult education organization, both as it exists today but more importantly, what we want it to become during the next twenty years. What is the most important reason that our adult education organization exists today, and what is the basic, most critical goal/purpose for having our organization's programs? Who are the "clients" that we should serve? How should we serve our organization's clients? What does our adult education organization's programs contribute to our society? What makes our organization unique and different from similar organizations and programs?

The answers to all of these questions will help us identify the organizational mission of our adult education organization. Remember that in thinking about our mission, it is just as important to consider what we are not trying to be and what we are not trying to do. Our adult education organization's Mission Statement should be concise stated clearly, and inspirational, both for individuals currently involved with our programs and individuals who presently know nothing about our adult education organization.

IN THINKING ABOUT OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION DURING THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS, I BELIEVE THAT...
(1) OUR BASIC GOAL OR PURPOSE FOR EXISTING SHOULD BE...
(2) OUR "CLIENTS" SHOULD BE...
(3) WE SHOULD SERVE OUR "CLIENTS" BY...
(4) THE MAIN THING WE CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY IS...
(5) WE ARE UNIQUE BECAUSE...

* Prepared by R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D., for use at the 1993 AAACE Adult Education Conference, November 20, 1993; may not be duplicated or adapted without prior consent of author.

WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT?

A leader's job is to create a vision. One of our challenges is to create a vision today for what we want our adult education organization to be tomorrow. An organization's vision statement is similar to its mission statement, but is based more upon the possible, desired ideal situation of **tomorrow** rather than the way things exist **today**. In fact, I often say that *today's vision statement is tomorrow's mission statement*. A vision statement:

* evokes **MENTAL IMAGES AND PICTURES** of the long-range plans of an organization;
* is **ANCHORED IN THE FUTURE**, not the present;
* describes an **IDEAL**, a standard of excellence; and
* **IS UNIQUE** for the specific organization.

Vision statements are similar to mission statements, but are different in that they are more ideal, inspirational, and motivational. The most important consideration for an organization's vision statement is not that the future, ideal image communicated is ever actually reached, but that the organization is committed to continually attempting to reach it. Following are two examples of organizational vision statements:

> ***The Extension organizations at the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University cooperate with each other; are the lead organizations for unique educational programs and problems solving techniques targeted at diverse audiences; and are committed and sensitive to concerns of limited resource audiences in implementing educational programs to address critical issues and needs...***
>
> ***Ohio State University Extension is broadly recognized throughout the state as a premier educational network. It is a dynamic organization strengthening individuals, families, and communities in partnership with the Federal Extension System. As Extension educators, we...***
> * ***concentrate on critical economic, environmental, leadership, and youth/family development issues;***
> * ***engage people in their own learning and subsequent actions;***
> * ***address emerging needs by developing programs that anticipate social and economic changes;***
> * ***apply valid, reliable research and information;***
> * ***unite and extend the broad base of university resources;***
> * ***maximize available resources by organizing and leading coalitions;***
> * ***educate without discrimination and employ people representing the diversity in the state's population;***
> * ***recruit and develop volunteers to multiply Extension's efforts;***
> * ***link local needs with researchers;***
> * ***teach with appropriate and effective educational techniques and methods; and***
> * ***value teamwork; recognize and support the contributions of one another.***

CREATING A VISION TOGETHER
(WORK SHEET) *

Stop for a moment and ask yourself the following questions: "If everything and everyone was perfect, and we had unlimited time, energies, and resources, what would I want our adult education organization to be like in the year 2013?" "Who would be the clientele of our organization?" "What would be our purpose in existing?" "What would be our adult education organization's most important contribution to the citizens of our state?"

When you've answered these questions, you have some basic components of a vision statement. Our adult education organization's Vision Statement should be the concise, easy-to-understand, and emotionally-inspiring statement of what we want our organization to be in the next century. It should "stretch" our organization from where it is today and be both an emotional as well as strategic "target" for us to aim for.

Please take a few minutes and provide your own answers to the following questions. Then, work with your teammates to share and condense your ideas into our adult education organization's Vision Statement.

IN THE YEAR 2013...
WHAT DO I WANT OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION TO BE LIKE (IN 30 WORDS OR LESS)?
WHO ARE OUR CLIENTELE?
WHAT IS OUR MAJOR PURPOSE, OR REASON FOR EXISTING?
WHAT IS OUR ORGANIZATION'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITIZENS OF OUR STATE?

* Prepared by R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D., for use at the 1993 AAACE Adult Education Conference, November 20, 1993; may not be duplicated or adapted without prior consent of author.

WHAT IS AN ACTION STRATEGY?

Organizational values and mission and vision statements are merely empty thoughts, words, and ideas unless an organization commits itself to making them happen. The most important thing that an organizational leader can do is to work with colleagues to identify the organization's basic beliefs (i.e., values), reason for existing (i.e., mission), and dreams for the future (i.e., vision) and then breathe life into them. Action strategies are the tools that one may utilize to "breathe life" into a strategic plan.

An action strategy is just that...**ACTION!** They describe in specific terms (without going into great detail)...

* **WHAT** needs to be done to reach the organization's vision, and fulfill its mission;
* **WHO** is going to do it;
* **WHEN** it is going to be done; and (to a lesser extent)
* **HOW** it is going to be done.

Other questions that may be addressed include: Who (*type* of person, *not* a specific individual) will be in charge of initiating the action strategy? What is a realistic timetable for implementation? What resources will be needed to accomplish the action strategy? If needed resources do not exist, can they be acquired or created? Who can help us obtain these resources?

Action strategies are best stated as short sentences that have subjects, verbs, and objects. For example:

> **"WE NEED TO INVOLVE MORE VOLUNTEERS IN OUR ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS"**

is NOT a well-written action strategy. The same idea, stated more strongly as an action strategy, could be:

> **"ADULT EDUCATORS WILL DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO IDENTIFY, RECRUIT, TRAIN, AND SUPPORT LIMITED RESOURCE ADULTS AS VOLUNTEERS TO TEACH OTHER LIMITED RESOURCE ADULT AUDIENCES".**

TRANSLATING OUR VALUES, MISSION, AND VISION INTO ACTION (WORK SHEET) *

Now that we have identified and discussed the values, mission, and vision for our adult education organization, let's translate these rather abstract ideas into more definite action steps. What are those factors that are most critical to the success of our organization in fulfilling the mission and vision we have developed? What action strategies are necessary to accomplish these critical success factors?

Keeping in mind the organizational values we have identified, please take a few moments and identify those critical success factors and action strategies that you believe are most important in fulfilling our mission and achieving our vision for our adult education organization.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE THAT OUR TEAM WILL FOCUS UPON IS: _____	
ONE FACTOR THAT IS CRITICAL TO OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION FULFILLING ITS MISSION AND VISION IS...	**THE FOLLOWING ACTION STRATEGY(IES) WILL BE NECESSARY FOR OUR ADULT EDUCATION ORGANIZATION TO ACCOMPLISH THIS CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR...**

* Prepared by R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D., for use at the 1993 AAACE Adult Education Conference, November 20, 1993; may not be duplicated or adapted without prior consent of author.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

The following references and resources will assist you in obtaining further information concerning strategic planning, especially as utilized with public sector/not-for-profit organizations,:

Bryson, J.M. (1989). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Conklin, N.L., Jones, J.M., & Safrit, R.D. (1992, May). *Organizational values of Ohio Cooperative Extension Service employees*. Paper presented at the Symposium Research in Agriculture and Extension Education, Columbus, OH.

Conklin, N.L., Jones, J.M., & Safrit, R.D. (1992) Values: Acting on our shared beliefs. *Journal of Home Economics, 4* (Winter), 17-21.

Hit, W.D. (1988). *The leader-manager: Guidelines for action*. Columbus, Ohio: Batelle Press.

Jimmerson, R.N. (1989). What values will guide Extension's future? *Journal of Extension, XXVII*, 16-18.

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: The Free Press.

Safrit, R.D. (1990). *Values clarification in the strategic planning process of an adult education organization*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

Safrit, R.D. (1991, October). *The role of values clarification in the strategic planning process of adult education organizations*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Safrit, R.D. (1991, October). *Organizational values clarification as a component of strategic planning: New horizons for qualitative and quantitative evaluation*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Evaluation Association, Chicago, IL.

Safrit, R.D. (1992). *Creating our future together: The Florida 4-H strategic planning conference, Participant handbook*. (Available from author)

Safrit, R.D. (1992). *Creating our future together: The Texas strategic planning conference, Participant handbook*. (Available from author)

Simerly, R.G., & Associates. (1987). *Strategic planning and leadership in continuing education*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Tichy, N.M. (1983). *Managing strategic change: Technical, political, and cultural dynamics*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

United States Department of Agriculture - Extension Service. (1991, September). *The strategic business planning process in 4-H: National strategic action planning for 4-H youth development*. Washington, D.C.

United States Department of Agriculture - Extension Service. (1991, October). *4-H national strategic business plan (first revision)*. Washington, D.C.

Williams, M.S. (1992). *Strategic planning for adult education organizations*. (Available from Mary S. Williams, CED III, Nassau County Extension Service, P.O. Box 1550, Callahan, Florida, 32011)

Wysner, J. (1991). *Rays of hope*. Los Angeles: Authors Unlimited.